BALLET TODAY

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

VARIOUS friends of mine who saw Sadler's Wells Ballet in Paris are unanimous that the company anced with a greater sparkle and life than they normally eveal at Covent Garden. Of course they were on their hettle facing a new and (it would appear) by no means lways favourably disposed audience so that each per- ormance was a challenge which all united in meeting. ut that they should dance so consistently above the orm we see in London seems to point to a failing in uty of our own audiences who could ensure the same eaction by a more keenly critical appreciation which rithholds all except merited applause. It has been said, *d nauseam*, that applause which never varies whatever ne quality of the performance has no value to a dancer, ut while audiences *will* persist in clapping their avourites even when they are palpably off form (and sympathy" applause is the greatest menace of all) the ompany remains without the necessary stimulus to pull ut just that little bit extra which we can glimpse just ften enough to make us go on hoping that it will one ay be a constant factor.

One other point about the Paris season—for *Le Lac es Cygnes*, which was the greatest success of the fort- ight though the décor was disliked, the company at its ull strength was used in casting every part. Pamela May nd Moira Shearer danced the two leading swans, and hat nightmare—the alternative cast—lay dormant. he result was a performance such as we never receive ere. I know that as a repertory ballet taking its place n a long and tiring season it is essential that all parts hould have adequate coverage, but could we not just nce or twice a year see *Le Lac des Cygnes* with the full ompany in all its glory? If the management at the oyal Opera House could hear as often as I do remarks rom ordinary members of the audience about "under- tudies on tonight" they would realise better than they lo at present what the public thinks of some of the asting arrangements.

A letter from Fernando Alonso and word from New ork tell of the formation of the Ballet Alicia Alonso which began its career with three performances in Havana on October 28th, 30th and 31st. The formation of this company is the direct result of the break up of Ballet Theatre this summer. For several years the Alonsos have spent their summer vacation in their native Cuba during which time they organised special performances of Ballet in which other members of the company, also on vacation, would appear. The experience gained is now bearing fruit, and the company is largely formed from former members of Ballet Theatre, including Igor Youskevitch and various dancers whom Londoners will remember from 1946—Barbara Fallis, Melissa Hayden, Cynthia Riseley and Paula Lloyd, not to mention Fernando Alonso himself and his brother, Alberto, who was a member of Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe before the war. The latter has choreographed two ballets, one of them being Ravel's *La Valse*, and *Les Sylphides*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Prince Igor*, *L'Après Midi d'un Faune* and a new version of *Peter and the Wolf* are also in the repertoire. The first tour is of the Caribbean, and all who admired the lovely Alicia Alonso when she was here (and I am told she is now one of the undoubtedly great ballerinas of the day) will wish her and her venture all the luck in the world.

The appearance of Danilova with Frederic Franklin is now a certainty and unless plans are altered their first night will be March 14th when they will dance in *Coppélia*. Other news of visiting artists is that Markova and Dolin will not, after all, join the Metropolitan Ballet but will dance a few special performances immediately after Christmas at the Empress Stadium, Earls Court. They are going to tour South Africa next spring.

Alan Storey's book, *Arabesques*, is at last out after its fair share of the vicissitudes attendant on book production in these days. Readers of *Ballet Today* will need no recommendation from me, for Storey has shown himself one of the most stimulating of critics with highly unorthodox but well-authenticated views of his own. It is the fashion to speak glibly of the masque and opera-musicale as the foundations of the English theatre and ballet tradition, but in fact very few people know anything about them. Alan Storey really does, and proceeds to enlighten us in his early chapters. Later on he has some extremely iconoclastic things to say about the Romantic Ballet, long considered an almost sacred subject, and comes to the present day via a discussion on the choreography of Fokine, Massine and Jooss and the English Tudor and Helpmann. Hugh Stevenson's decorations have even more than their usual aptness to the context.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Leo Kersley on the birth of their daughter, Alexandra, on November 26th.

Stop Press.—Ballet Rambert sail from Fremantle on January 14th and should be back in London on February 16th. P.W.M.

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

"MIRACLE IN THE GORBALS", A BALLET WHICH WAS GREATLY ADMIRED IN PARIS

SADLER'S WELLS IN PARIS

By FERDINAND REYNA

THE purpose of this review is to set down the impressions made by Sadler's Wells on the public and Press during their season at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, which lasted from September 21st to October 3rd.

Paris sees so much banal choreography (together with some fine work) that the word "masterpiece" must be employed with considerable reserve. However *Miracle in the Gorbals* is an authentic masterpiece of modern choreography and we highly congratulate Mr. Robert Helpmann. This ballet makes a striking impression of virility, austerity and deep thought finely expressed.

It is regrettable but true that many of the public do not want to see poverty and slums in a ballet. They call it realism, and the public is right if the dance does not transfigure the setting and décor.

For instance, in Roland Petit's *Le Rendez-vous* everything is superficial and realistic. On the other hand, in *Miracle in the Gorbals* the slum is transformed. Here truly, is the drama of the strange Christ struggling with hypocrisy, intolerance and brutal bestiality. The magic almost supernatural atmosphere is completely sustained to the end. These girls and these workmen in their caps move us as the symbol of a dark and hidden humanity—which, however low in the social scale has none the less a soul and sensibility.

It is difficult to speak of the interpretations of individual artists in the Sadler's Wells Ballet. There is

rict homogeneity from the largest to the smallest roles. argot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann, for example, o not show themselves off in the puerile manner of the ar who insists on shining before the public and their olleagues like the peacock spreading its tail. And it is r this reason that the public here admired above all e *ensembles*, the care and finish of the groupings. In *Lac des Cygnes* and *Les Sylphides* the whole *corps de allet* showed a distinction and deportment such as is rely seen nowadays. No matter what the company, e *ensembles* are nearly always indifferent and ragged. he star shines and the rest of the company is ill-atched and often vulgar.

At times Margot Fonteyn seems a little cold. bviously this artist does not seek an easy success. he has to be seen many times before the depths of her t can be analysed and appreciated for it is reserved, ure, even a little distant, but none the less grand. is boring to keep on hearing about the technique of ch artists as Fonteyn. Summing up, we would say at Margot Fonteyn is a pure, noble and austere star f the dance. And we are happy, not only to have atched her every night, but to place her amongst the lect few which the history of the dance will one day nsecrate.

Décor, costumes, the leading roles, the *ensembles* and he production of *Le Lac des Cygnes* made a complete hole and we recaptured that sense of fairyland which e seem more and more to be losing. The full length *e Lac des Cygnes* in Paris was a redoubtable feat. Did it eem a little too long with its first and third act tableaux, ts mime and its *divertissements*? Not at all, the evening assed without a moment of boredom. For example, he dance of the young peasant (June Leighton) really eemed a part of the ballet whereas, all too often, one eels that the soloists are dancing only for themselves, vithout warmth, detached from the *ensemble*. Michael omes was a dignified Siegfried and an excellent partner o the star of the Company.

In *Dante Sonata* Frederick Ashton gave us a work of igh import. What an impeccable sense of movement, hat variety and, above all, grandeur in the groupings, he entrances and exits. Everything holds together like he picture of a great master faithful to the law of inner ecessity, here expressed in a series of visions which ucceed each other in a dreamlike continuity.

So much the worse if we belittle those who revere ésar Franck, though his music has always had for us a ery relative value. Does it lend itself to the dance? We do not believe so. It lacks colour, contrast and nusical substance. For that reason, although Frederick shton's *Symphonic Variations* succeeds in itself, we ere left cold. On the other hand, what charm in his *es Patineurs*, what freshness of imagination and what reedom! We relax before such an absence of pre-ension, such light-heartedness, which seeking only to enchant us, succeeds perfectly; an enterprise as difficult, or even more so, as that of constructing some complicated machine to do extraordinary feats. The public showed its joy and pleasure in repeated recalls.

Scènes de Ballet by Stravinsky is difficult material for a choreographer. Undoubtedly Ashton has done everything possible with it. In their abstraction the *Scènes* succeed each other in a cool geometry, appealing to the intellect rather than to the heart. In these four ballets Ashton showed us four facets of a varied, flexible talent which does not search for easy solutions.

It appeared to us that Miss Ninette de Valois sacrifices the dance a little to the nobility of her intentions, to her taste and the grandeur of classic décor inspired by the masterpieces of the painter.

One is fascinated by a work so faithful to its aesthetic as *The Rake's Progress*. The scene of the orgy is admirably carried out; music, mime and dance are all in harmony. The period atmosphere is done with relish. Might it not perhaps have stressed a little more the satirical side of Hogarth's art? Masks might here have been used to advantage.

Checkmate, a *ballet d'action* of high fantasy, is a rich and sumptuous work. One follows the action with a sustained interest from first to last.

The discipline of the *corps de ballet* was seen at its best in the *Job* of William Blake which inspired de Valois' conscientious and distinguished choreography. Robert Helpmann was a magnificent Satan and the static roles of Alfred Rodriques (Job) and June Brae (his Wife) were maintained with great dignity. The extremely ingenious production and the successive changes of scene gave the impression of a mystic vision.

One should, at this point, mention all the others who danced in these ballets but there is room only for Moira Shearer as the loving young girl in *Miracle in the Gorbals* and Julia Farron as the reclaimed prostitute in the same ballet, Pamela May as the Black Queen and Alexis Rassine as one of the Red Knights in *Checkmate*.

The musical direction of Constant Lambert and Warwick Braithwaite can be praised without reserve. Also the music itself and the décor which proved the vitality in England today both of music and painting.

We might conclude with these words—that the Sadler's Wells Ballet shows what can be done by love of an art and the absence of limited ambitions. Its creators have aimed far and high. And they have reached the goal at which they aimed.

The photograph on the cover is of Maria Tallchief and Nicolas Magallanes in Balanchine's "Serenade" by the New York City Ballet Company.

Photograph by New York Times

MARGOT FONTEYN AND MICHAEL SOMES REHEARSING BEFORE THE PARIS FIRST NIGHT

—AND IN GERMANY

By J. STUART BARKER

FOLLOWING close on the heels of Roland Petit's *Ballets de Paris*, the Sadler's Wells Ballet opened in Dusseldorf on October 6th, after a short and apparently none too successful season in Paris. All performances were sold out well in advance and an extra matinée had to be arranged to cope with the unprecedented demand for seats. The choice of programmes was admirable taking into account the fact that Germany has been virtually isolated from Western culture for some fifteen years, and therefore cannot be expected to appreciate all its latest and more *recherché* developments—a point which the French Ballet completely ignored—and suffered in consequence. (Janine Charrat's *La Femme et son Ombre*, is a tough nut for even the hardened ballet-goer to crack, let alone the German, who was never particularly ballet-conscious anyway. *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* and *Que le Diable l'emporte* fared rather better, but it was the classical *pas de deux* and *Le Beau Danube*, which scored the biggest success, travesty though the Petit Company's version is.)

To return to our *moutons*—Sadler's Wells offered *Les Sylphides* (beautifully danced by Fonteyn and Somes on the first night), *Checkmate*, *Scènes de Ballet*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Dante Sonata*, *Les Patineurs* and *Symphonic Variations*, with a couple of "Bluebirds" and a "Rose Adagio" thrown in for good measure.

Les Sylphides naturally appealed to the German, who still has a sneaking affection for his woodland glade and likes to hear familiar music. Thus won over he was prepared to enter into the spirit of *Checkmate*—a theme again partially familiar—and appreciate the technical brilliance of *Scènes de Ballet* even if it was a trifle beyond him. (I personally found *Checkmate* vastly improved on a stage nearer the size of the one for which it was

riginally designed—Covent Garden is too vast, and ne sense of the action "closing in" is destroyed—a angerous characteristic in a work which in the first lace is too long to hold the spectator's attention nroughout.)

The Rake's Progress was an obvious winner, the excel-ence of the mime bringing something new to the erman conception of ballet. *Dante Sonata* again was a natural", its barefoot technique coming closer to the re-1933 German school of dance.

The two outstanding successes however were *Les atineurs* and *Symphonic Variations*. The first bars of leyerbeer's music had the audience swaying (as had trauss's the previous week), and to be given in ldition lanterns, skaters, snow, period costumes, more azzling *fouettés, and* Donald Britton was almost too nuch, and nostalgia gave place to wild enthusiasm. onald Britton incidentally seems to be the first "blue oy" since Turner who has really caught the spirit of ne role. It was pleasant, too, to find him the correct shade of blue again, and his *brio* which sent him straight through one of the wings on one occasion brought an exhilaration that one had come to associate only with the really original Russians, and which makes Skouratoff such an exciting person to watch.

Alexander Grant's solo in *Symphonic Variations* was also a satisfying moment, but the whole work was danced so impeccably that I was inclined to agree with my companion (a German engineer who, having been a prisoner in Russia, was by no means a newcomer to ballet). As the short but telling silence which followed the fall of the curtain was broken by deafening applause, he turned to me and said quietly "Never in my life, have I ever seen anything like that." A final tribute came from Gustav Grundgens, director of the Dusseldorf theatres, and one of the few people who matter on the German stage to-day. He told the Press that he had been contemplating trying to put on some form of ballet this season, but after seeing Sadler's Wells, not even he would dare!

ADVANCE BOOKING—QUEUE HERE

By L. GORDON SMITH

HOW I hate balletomanes. There appear to be nine-hundred people in front of me, and I am cold. he queue is moving very slowly. *Need* it take so long o buy a maximum number of twelve tickets?

The trouble with these people is that they do not ake out proper lists in advance. Just a little organi-ation, that is all they need. Just a little common-sense.

I'll put my list in my pocket, just to save it from etting crumpled. . . .

I loathe the human race (especially balletomanes) and loathe its silly face, its lack of grace, the way it walks nd—oh, so much!—the way it talks.

There now appear to be nine thousand people in front f me, cabbage-heads to a man—and woman. I am cold nd tired. I am standing on the draughtiest corner in ondon and my poor old feet ache. The queue has come o a standstill. *Why* does it take people so long to buy ne dozen simple little tickets?

The thing is, they wait until they get right up to the ox-office before deciding what they want and then ither about which day Auntie Aggie can come. If they ould just be a little bit business-like, or would that be o inartistic?

I think I will transfer my list to this pocket instead, hen it will be handier in case the time ever comes . . .

I detest all humanity and bitterly regret all that I have one to popularise ballet. I am cold and tired and ungry. Four separate and distinct winds are blowing imultaneously, and all of them centred on ME. It is eginning to rain. My feet ache, my back aches and my head aches. So does my heart, as there now seem to be nine million people in front of me and the queue, n longer motionless, appears to be moving backwards.

I wonder who holds the record for The Longest Time Ever Taken for Buying Twelve Tickets?

I know just what is going on up there. *Oh, no, that won't do. Beryl can't come then . . . that won't do either, because of George . . . Oh, no, you* can't *have sold out for Bobby's First Night! . . . hear that, Peggy? Sold out! I shall* die, *won't you? What will my darling Bobby say if I'm not there on his first night? Well, what* shall *we have then?* etc., ad nauseam.

Why will not these boneheads make *lists*? Proper, legible lists, in date order, with alternatives? Just a little horse-sense would go such a long way.

I think I'll hold my list in my hand; after all, you never know, and it might bring me luck . . .

(Coma sets in).

Good heavens, I'm there! Well, nearly. My turn next and ten minutes to go yet. I am so glad all those charming people got served in time. It is so nice to see the ballet properly appreciated by an intelligent public; I must see if I cannot convert a few more Philistines next season. Any minute now and that charming man in front of me will have got all his tickets and then it will be *me*. Not nearly such a long wait this time, was it? Now it is my turn.

Good evening, how are you? Tired? You must be! Now, let me see, what do I want? Where's my list? . . . *Where's my list?* . . . Hell!

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

SLAVENSKA, MARKOVA, KRASSOVSKA AND DANILOVA REHEARSING DOLIN'S RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FAMOUS "PAS DE QUATRE"

THE NEW YORK SEASON

By MURRAY N. FRIEDMAN

BALLET Russe de Monte Carlo celebrated its tenth anniversary by opening September 18th at the Metropolitan Opera House after an absence of five years from that historic theatre. In addition to refurbished costumes and décor and an array of new faces in the *corps de ballet*, several guest stars were engaged for the "Met." season—Mia Slavenska, Alicia Markova, Agnes de Mille, Anton Dolin and José Torres. The general idea was that these artists, added to Alexandra Danilova, Nathalie Krassovska, Ruthanna Boris, Frederic Franklin and Leon Danielian would provide the necessary "box office" allure to keep the big house filled. Whether the strategy was successful or whether it was the opportunity of seeing ballet at the Metropolitan for City Center prices, attendance was very satisfactory throughout the three weeks' engagement.

On the artistic side, however, the results were by no means so consistently satisfactory. Two Massine revivals, *Seventh Symphony* and *Rouge et Noir*, Mr. Dolin's re-creation of *Pas de Quatre* and a trifle by Ruthanna Boris, *Quelques Fleurs*, were the novelties offered. For the rest, interest was centred in the alternation of ballerinas in familiar rôles.

Let us take *Seventh Symphony* first. Set to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, which Wagner declared "the apotheosis of the dance", it attempts to depict, in choreographic terms, the creation and destruction of the world. So much has happened in the past ten years

at the ballet is already terribly *passé*. It simply has othing to say to us. All that kept it from being a smal failure was the chance to see Miss Markova in mething more substantial than the delicate, romantic les with which she has become identified in recent ears. Dolin took the role originally created by Igor ouskevitch, and Frederic Franklin took the same part e had in the original production. Mary Ellen Moylan nd Robert Lindgren performed excellently in other oles. Costumes and décor were those by Christian érard.

Rouge et Noir, one year younger than *Seventh Symphony*, needs an enormous amount of work and tightening up before it will be ready for serious consideration. This second of the Massine symphonic ballets to be revived this season is set to the Shostakovitch First Symphony. Décor and costumes were by Henri Matisse. The meaning of the ballet is described in these cosmic terms: "Man, symbolising the poetic spirit, is pursued and overtaken by brutal forces. The men of the city encounter the men of the field and bear them off. Woman, parted from Man, is tormented in her solitude

THE SAME BALLERINAS AS THEY APPEAR IN PERFORMANCE

hotograph by Walter E. Owen

by an evil spirit. Man eludes the brutal forces and finds Woman again, but joy is short-lived, for in freeing himself from his worldly enemies he is conquered by destiny". Perhaps it was the formlessness of the performance, but most of this was over the heads of the audience. Alicia Markova and Frederic Franklin, who created the parts originally, were back in their old roles. Here, again, it was good to see Markova get her teeth into a part in which she can be something more than a floating grace. That she has been the victim of the worst sort of type-casting for box-office reasons, perhaps, is now quite plain. How boring it must have been to do little but Giselles, Swan Queens and Sylphs for performance after performance, season after season! I have a feeling she really enjoyed these symphonic roles.

Nevertheless, I wondered before and I wonder now why these symphonic ballets were revived. The rehearsal time could have been spent more profitably on half-a-dozen other things. If the management was absolutely set on revivals, however, much more care in their preparation should have been expended.

Pas de Quatre sounded very good on paper. This tongue-in-cheek interpretation of the Romantic Ballet of the Taglioni period emerged as something almost clownish. Despite Danilova, Markova, Slavenska and Krassovska as the four ballerinas, the audience resented the general sloppiness of the performance. Strangely enough, the ballet was later danced to better response by Ruthanna Boris, Mary Ellen Moylan, Gertrude Tyven and Patricia Wilde.

Agnes de Mille appeared as guest artist in her own ballet, *Rodeo*. Aaron Copland, composer of the score, conducted. This ballet has been slowly dying for lack of spirit, but Miss de Mille not only danced the cowgirl with humour and feeling, but seemed to carry the company along with her. Frederic Franklin was his old self as the cowhand she loves and Eric Kristen, seen in London in the "dream ballet" scene of *Oklahoma!* did well as the head wrangler.

Ruthanna Boris, ballerina and choreographer, who gave us *Cirque de Deux* last year, prepared the only new ballet of the current season. This one was called *Quelques Fleurs* and sub-titled "A Legend of Villa Careto". Settings were by Robert Davison and the music was arranged by Harry Schumer of excerpts from François Auber. The argument is inconsequential: A countess, helped by an alchemist, tries to capture the affections of a young gentleman through the liberal use of perfumes. As you might expect, she discovers that it is not she but the perfumes that have captivated him. Mary Ellen Moylan danced the Countess with style. Frank Hobi was all one could expect as the Alchemist, and Leon Danielian was the young man of fashion. In secondary roles, Yvonne Chouteau, Gertrude Tyven and Patricia Wilde were delightful as the three "fragrant ladies" who try to make the countess irresistible to her elusive love. *Cirque de Deux* was a charming trifle, but I fear that *Quelques Fleurs* as a ballet is only a trifle. It does have its moments that make one chuckle, however.

José Torres, a Spanish dancer who has had a great success in Paris, made his New York debut with the company. After having had Argentinita and Amaya, it is not surprising that Torres was something less than a sensation. His five solos included "Sevillia", "Asturida", "Acquarella", "Goyescas" and "Triana". Torres probably will do better when he has become acclimatised. At a later performance, for example, in *Madronos*, when he replaced Frederic Franklin, he was considerably better.

Highlights of the season that should be noted in closing were Slavenska in *Giselle*, (Danilova and Markova also danced this ballet), *Swan Lake* and *Coppélia*. Moussia Larkina, remembered from de Basil's London season, in the Harlequin variation in *Night Shadow*, and the new *Gaité Parisienne*. Massine has succeeded in giving new appeal to this favourite closing ballet, as well as to *Le Beau Danube*.

Competing for attention with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for part of its stay was the Paris Opera Ballet which opened September 21st. They were invited as part of the Jubilee of the City of New York. There is not too much to write of them. It was good that the New York ballet public had the chance to see them in action, but conditions were not of the best. Transportation difficulties made it impossible to bring over more than part of the company. Furthermore, the stage of the City Center was far too shallow. The Opera Ballet has nothing if not production, and the original sets were crowded on to the tiny stage to their detriment. The dancers, too, were not at their best since many had to dance in three ballets every evening.

The same critique may be applied to all the ballets presented. The Paris Opera Ballet has its own tradition of choreography and performances, and they are different from ours; not necessarily inferior, only different. Much of what seemed dull to us would undoubtedly be quite rewarding to an audience brought up in the tradition, especially if the ballets were presented as they were meant to be.

The greatest success of the stay was *Les Mirages*, a ballet by Lifar to music by Henri Sauguet. Décor was by A.-M. Cassandre. The programme of the ballet is not much. The Dancer, pursued by his Shadow, finds on the Moon Queen's abandoned couch in the Moon Palace the key to all pleasure. With this key he frees the Daughters of the Night, but learns alas! that all is a mirage. Yvette Chauviré was the Shadow, Michelin Bardin the Woman and Michel Renault the Young Man (The Dancer). This ballet was truly exciting. Chauviré was a fantastic success with her lightness, her command of gesture and her beautiful way of moving. Michel Renault, on the stage for forty minutes, was also well received.

Suite en Blanc was a showpiece for many of the company's leading lights. Arranged by Lifar to music from Edouard Lalo's *Namouna*, and with décor by Maurice Brouline, it is a series of ten choreographic studies designed to illustrate the skill of the ballet dancers of the National Academy of Music and Dance.

Among the other Lifar ballets, *Le Chevalier et la Demoiselle* in two acts, fell rather flat. Set to a mediaeval theme it never gets anywhere. On the physical side, the use of levels and platforms was unimpressive. After all, the Paris Opera stage is 120 feet deep, three times the depth of the City Center's. Mlle. Chauviré was the Demoiselle, Alexandre Kalioujny the Chevalier Errant and Micheline Bardin the Shepherd. Phillipe Gaubert was responsible for the music and Cassandre for the décor and costumes.

Of the non-Lifar ballets, *Palais de Cristal*, created by George Balanchine in the summer of 1947 when he was with the Opéra, is a fine showcase for the company. Christiane Vaussard, Micheline Bardin, Roger Ritz, Alexandre Kalioujny, Max Bozzoni, Madeleine Lafon, Jacqueline Moreau, Geneviève Guillot and Denise Bourgeois all appeared to advantage. The music was Bizet's Symphony in C and the décor was by Léonore Gini.

Soir de Fête, a ballet in the old-fashioned style by Leo Staats to music from Delibes' *La Source* was well received. Christiane Vaussard danced the female lead charmingly and Roger Ritz was the male lead. Settings were by Touchargues.

Castor and Pollux, taken from the fourth act of Rameau's ballet-opera of the same name created in 1737, featured Mlles. Moreau and Guillot and M. Renault. Choreography was by Albert Aveline after M. Guerra, settings by Dresa and Mouline and costumes by Dresa. The figures in the dance are characterised as the "Happy" and "Gloomy" Shadows.

Yvette Chauviré can come back to New York any time she pleases assured of an enthusiastic public. It is too bad she could not have been shown off to greater advantage. Kalioujny was superb when he had a chance to do anything. A little *pas de trois* in a *divertissement* in which he danced brought the house down. He could be one of the great male dancers of modern times. Roger Ritz deserves a special tribute for continuing to give his best in spite of poor roles and a back-breaking schedule.

The departure of the older companies has left the field open to Ballet Society, now known as the New York City Ballet Company. It opened at the City Center October 11th and was scheduled to appear every Monday and Tuesday night until November 23rd. It is too early to assess the season, but already there have been two highlights. The first was the first opera performance of George Balanchine's *Four Temperaments* with music by Paul Hindemith. The piece is arranged as a Theme and four variations, marked Melancholic, Sanguinic, Phlegmatic and Choleric. Kurt Seligmann did the scenery and costumes, and while the scenery is satisfactory, the costumes cut the dancers' line and are generally distracting. The ballet is not one of Balanchine's best but there were some parts that were hauntingly beautiful, particularly the slow lifts in the second variation. Beatrice Tompkins, Elise Reiman, Jocelyn Vollmar and Francisco Moncion appeared in the statement of the Theme. Francisco Moncion, substituting for the ailing Herbert Bliss, danced the latter's part in the first variation with Georgia Hiden and Rita Karlin. Maria Tallchief and Nicolas Magallanes were outstanding in the second variation. Todd Bolender was featured in the third and Tanacquil Le Clercq in the fourth.

Spectators at the October 25th performance were treated to the guest appearance of André Eglevsky in the *Symphony in C*. This marks a new policy on the part of the company, that of guest artists. John Kriza was originally stated to be the guest, but an unfortunate accident incapacitated him and Mr. Eglevsky stepped in on a few hours' notice. *Symphony in C* is now brilliantly cast. With Marie Tallchief, Tanacquil Le Clercq, Marie-Jeanne and Jocelyn Vollmar as ballerinas,

(*Continued on page 13*)

YVETTE CHAUVIRÉ, A GREAT SUCCESS IN NEW YORK

ENGLISH RITUAL DANCES

By HERBERT STONELEY

EYEBROWS may lift at that title. Many assume there has never been ritual dancing in England. Surely the truth is that little is practised today, but when Charles the Second was called "The Merry Monarch", and his realm laid claim to a similar title, the three great loves of our nation were music, drama, and dancing. What did people dance? Why did they dance? They danced "country dances" naturally, but those hearty exercises of every village green have roots growing deep down in the soil of English culture. The villages preserved them because they were closest to nature and also to the Church, for just as music and drama had been taught and fostered by the Church, so had dancing.

One of our oldest country dances is the Morris Dance, which, though it has died out in most parts is still held dear in Lancashire, Cumberland, and the Cotswolds, and it was allied to the Church as much as continental Carols, themselves ancient ritualistic dances. These Carols were originally round dances, the music being supplied by the dancers chanting the words and clapping their hands, but only the words and music remain to show this origin. So with the Morris. This was always the dance for the Rushbearing, the name, be it noted, for many local holidays, or holy days, these holy days being held significantly enough, at the time when the rushes were at their ripest. Other names for these Church holidays are Wakes, or Vigils, held, you would find in older districts, at the anniversary date of the Saint of the Parish Church, the oldest in each town.

At Rushbearing all the villagers proceeded to the moors and hills to cut the rushes. These were piled on carts in special designs, each village having its own secret design but roughly in the form of a tall house, surely a replica at first of God's House, the village Church. On top sat the village fool and the sides were decorated with emblems or ornaments of a religious character, some in the form of texts, others with the cock of Saint Peter, more with I.H.S., some with the labarum, and again with alpha and omega.

No horse was allowed to draw the sacred cart. Instead, two ropes with staves at intervals were fastened to the shafts, two dancers to each rope-stave, and from the gathering ground right back to Church they danced the Morris Dance, dragging their rushes, the best floor covering they could provide for the best house they knew, their Church or the House of God. All dancers were specially chosen and dressed in proverbial dress with white stockings, knee breeches, highly polished clogs to which they fastened bells and decorated them with rows and patterns of brightly gleaming nails. They had long liberty caps and gay shakers, and the dancers were men. So they danced their load to Church where the Vicar awaited them to give the rushes his blessing before they were given to God.

Always these Rushbearing dances had a connection with harvest or tithe gathering ceremonies. In Lancashire and Cumberland the Rushbearing Services are mostly held at the week commencing the Harvest Festival. Now, though the dancing has been forgotten children still carry the sacred emblems to be blessed by the Vicar, but old folks who have seen the rush carts, or those who care to inspect the northern museums know how great a part these once played in the religious life of the villages.

But the Morris Dance is not the only ritualistic dance, for the Maypole is certainly of ritualistic origin. In the North, the oldest Christian part of our land remember, the Maypole Dance appears to have been known in pre-Christian times. Maypole dancing is felt to be a totem

THE BAMPTON (OXON.) MORRIS DANCE, PERFORMED O
WHIT-MONDAY FOR OVER 500 YEARS
Photograph by Courtesy of the British Travel Association

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THE BACUP COCONUTTERS WHO DANCE THROUGH THE STREETS ON EASTER MONDAY. THIS IS SAID TO BE BRITAIN'S MOST BARBARIC FOLK DANCE

pole dance, a rejoicing after illness, or perhaps the plague. Old Testament days were great dancing days, as can be verified by reading that book, and the totem pole was surely the same in origin as the pole which carried the serpent ordered by Moses in the wilderness. Many totems have weird animals. That of Moses a serpent.

When examined, most olden country dances will be found to have religious roots. Even the titles, for new ones carry the same idea, seem to point to this, i.e. "Gathering Pea Pods" and the names of horses, man's great helper in gathering his precious crops.

England, especially Scotland and Ireland with so many continental connections must have known the same cultures. Most who study Ballet will know of the Basque and West French ritualistic dances. All will remember the music of Falla whose music is based on the ancient ritualistic dances, his Miller's Dance showing its connection with the harvest once again.

The religious connection of dancing can be traced through other titles such as St. John's Dance, while the title of St. Vitus's Dance, long ago a religious dance of significance, remains as the title of a dancing form of disease!

In Seville and the Balearic Isles religious dances are a great attraction still. In England only the fossil remains can be found, but these fossils show the ancient cultures of the people, and in the North are sufficiently preserved to demonstrate that dancing, like music and drama, was once sponsored by the Church, and was not just a boisterous pastime for the labouring classes of the countryside. True, the great relaxation of farming folk was "country dancing" the high light being his harvest supper and dance, which still remain. Long ago however his dancing led him to Church to present his offering, often with a text, where it was first blessed by the village priest, and sponsored by the grateful thanks of his neighbours and his friends.

(*Continued from page 11*)

and four such able partners as Nicolas Magallanes, Francisco Moncion, Herbert Bliss and Todd Bolender, the ballet is always splendidly performed.

Maria Tallchief continues to gain in stature and young Tanacquil LeClercq is developing into a rounded performer. Jocelyn Vollmar, a new addition to the company, formerly ballerina of the San Francisco Opera Ballet, is definitely a major asset. Marie-Jeanne is her usual sparkling self: her technique is formidable, and when she is properly presented, as in *Concerto Barocco*, she can compare with anyone on the contemporary ballet scene.

BALLET AT THE VENICE FESTIVAL

By FERDINAND REYNA

IN accordance with this year's arrangements, after the Film Festival at Venice the International Festival of Music took place in the exquisite eighteenth century Fenice Theatre.

For this occasion, Aurel Milloss prepared three new ballets: *Orpheus* with music by Stravinsky, *Marsyas* (Luigi Dallapiccola,) and *The Nymph of Diana* to the *Sylvia* music of Léo Delibes.

Three Greek themes in one performance might have become monotonous, but this was not so as Milloss treated each theme in a quite different manner.

Orpheus, the latest work of the great composer was a European première as Balanchine had already presented his ballet in April of this year in New York. The music overflows with a serene lyricism, stripped to a sublime asceticism except in the scene of the Bacchantes who torment Orpheus, where one finds allusions and imitations in the style of 17th century French music for the clavichord.

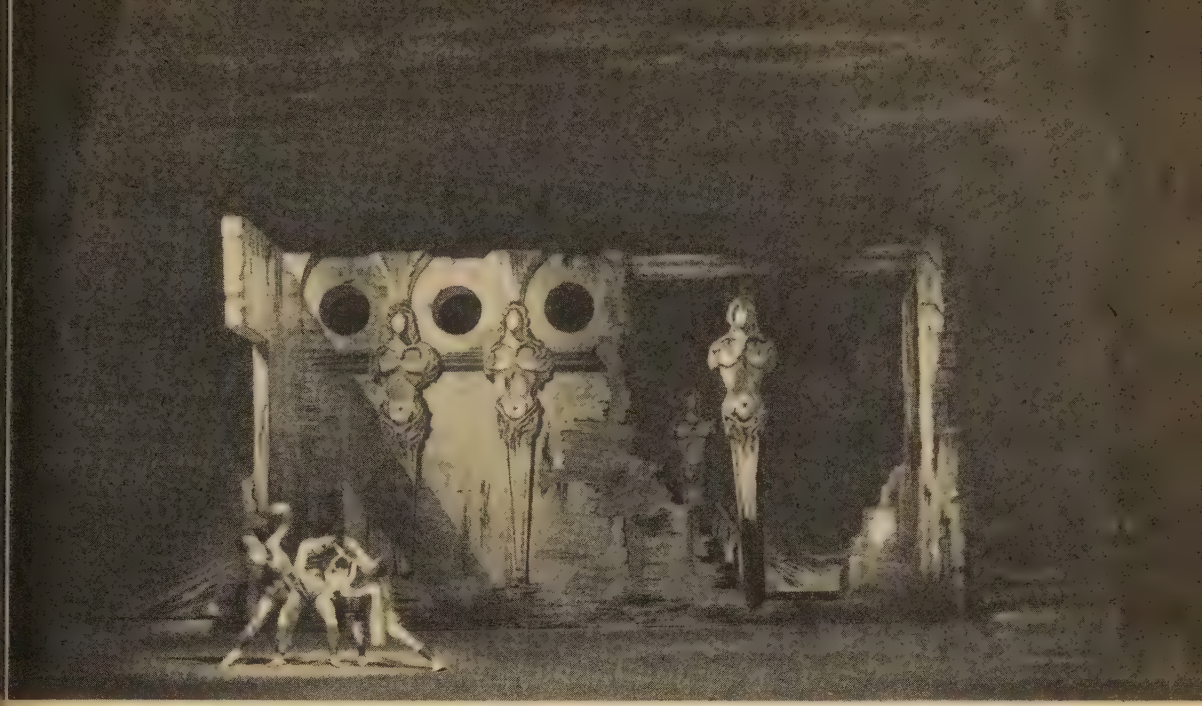
Milloss's choreography keeps to the spirit and graphic character of the music. His manner of shaping this work is sober but with a vigorous development of choreographic architecture. His "Baroque" is solemn but never ompous, transparent, of extreme simplicity. There is none of the customary mythology in this ballet. Even the tableau of Hell is like a transfiguration of destiny and we are far from earthly excesses.

This spirit of abstraction, one might say of severity, has been perfectly understood and rendered, above all by Attilia Radice (Eurydice), by Guido Lauri (Orpheus) and Filippo Morucci as a sinister representation of Death. The first two are extremely moving in the scene of meeting, when Eurydice is still enveloped in her grave clothes, and the frenzy of Orpheus as he touches her body and she returns to life is poignant. By general consent this is a great moment in Ballet. Milloss here seems to have touched the heights. The décor and costumes of Fabrizio Clerici are equally felicitous, owing inspiration, perhaps, to Piranesi.

Luigi Dallapiccola, composer of *Marsyas*, the score of which goes back to about 1942, here forsakes his predilection for formal canons in the Schönberg manner and has written a work which sings with purity and a sweet, fresh melodiousness. Milloss has constructed a choreographic drama without pantomime in which every movement is a dramatic expression of dance and dance alone. The action is in the movement itself and in the attitudes taken up by the groupings. It is an

A GROUPING FROM "MARSYAS", PERFORMED AT THE VENICE FESTIVAL

Photograph by Giacomelli, Venice



hotograph by Giacomelli, Venice

A SCENE FROM "ORPHEUS"

bsolutely modern conception which states once more he aesthetic of the choreographer.

Elio Foggiolti (Marsyas) has an outstanding suppleness, nd Water Zappolini, an Apollo imperious in his mpassiveness, triumphs over the Satyr who has been ash enough to defy him. Toti Scialoja, the designer, loes not lack daring and this time has caused astonishment with the originality of his decorative conception.

La Nymphe de Diane or *Sylvia*, has become in this Venetian version by Milloss a *divertissement* of the 1890's —a Greek ballet *à la Degas*. Using the celebrated score and the main theme of the libretto, Milloss has created another little ballet which in a sense brings back memories of the *Sylvia* period, those happy days of the patrons of the Opera, the carriages and the archdukes. The dancing is lightly satirical, kindly and without deliberate caricature. At the end, Attilia Radice as Sylvia, in order to escape the pursuit of the Black Huntsman (the bounding Guilio Perugini) has him shot by her very modern Amazons. The décor and costumes by Filippo de Pisis provide a polished frame to this ironical evocation of the past.

The success of this season was undeniably great and proved that Ballet in Italy is not only for a small, select public. After these performances one could judge how much Italian Ballet owes to Aurel Milloss. The company of the Rome Opera deserves to be known and it is to be hoped that another season will allow the international public to see and judge for themselves.

ATTILIA RADICE AND GUIDO LAURI IN "ORPHEUS"
Photograph by Interfoto, Venice

THE FIRST DUTCH BALLET

By JANET SINCLAIR and LEO KERSLEY

IN Holland before 1939, interest in classical ballet was almost non-existent and teachers scarce, whereas the Central European school was popular with teachers, dancers and the audience. Yvonne Georgi, a noted exponent of the latter style and possessor of a strong personality, dominated the large company attached to the Amsterdam Opera House.

Throughout the war, Dutch dancers shared with the other people of Holland the incredible privations and horrors of German occupation. During the last year, young men were not allowed to set foot outside their homes under pain of deportation to Germany, life was at a standstill and the people dropped dead in the streets from cold and starvation. It was small wonder, then, that no friendliness was displayed after the liberation towards those who had shown German sympathies, and among those not tolerated by the public when artistic life restarted was Yvonne Georgi.

Darja Colin returned to Amsterdam from America to re-organise the ballet and the dancers made minor appearances in operas and, this summer, in Miss Colin's ballet to Ravel's *Danses Nobles et Sentimentales*, which was performed as curtain-raiser to the same composer's *L'Heure Espagnol*. In the meanwhile, many of the more independent dancers had become bored with this comparatively lucrative but artistically unrewarding occupation and left to work in variety or revues, or to give their own dance recitals. Among the latter, Mascha ter Weeme and Tony Raadt were particularly successful but in 1947 the latter went abroad. Mascha ter Weeme and the young choreographer Max Dooyes then had the idea of forming a small independent group to perform in the classical idiom, towards which a reaction was taking place.

So just over a year ago the "Ballet der Lage Landen" came into being. The first entirely Dutch ballet company, its position closely resembles that of Ballet Rambert fifteen years ago, with the one great disadvantage that they have no theatre of their own. Occasionally the management of the Opera House allows them an evening when the theatre is not giving opera, a play or musical show; the difficulties of their provincial one-night stands with inadequate stage staff and insufficient stage rehearsal have to be experienced to be believed. Again as in the 'thirties here in England, the public is wildly enthusiastic about the visiting companies —the Champs-Elysées and primarily Sadler's Wells— while interest in the native product is lukewarm and the critics over-severe. Another great handicap that no longer worries us in England is that few dancers start training as children because of the lack of public interest, only beginning at sixteen or seventeen when they leave school and can choose their own career, with or without parental opposition. Of course this must partly account for the stimulating maturity of the dancers and their ballets. As always, the ever-present difficulty is money: even with a very slight State grant, grudgingly allowed, the position is nearly always desperate and only those with the strongest belief in ballet can resist the financial lure of the music-hall—even a dancer must live!

The group numbers a dozen dancers among its permanent members, and added to its other difficulties is that of borrowing supplementary dancers to make up the twenty required for *The Street of Imagination* from the Opera, or from the "Scapino" company that gives performances for children, or from the various free-lance performers available.

Like our own earliest male dancers, Max Dooyes started dancing comparatively late, against strong family opposition. Not outstanding in the classroom, on the stage he has a strange arresting personality and a sincerity carrying instant conviction. However, in common with Tudor, and his favourite choreographer Ashton, it is as choreographer that he is outstanding: indeed, we consider his ballet *The Street of Imagination* as important to the group and potentially to the ballet world as *The Green Table* in the case of Ballets Jooss. It is for this reason that we wish some enterprising impresario would bring the company to London for a week: using two pianos, it would not be an expensive experiment and would give London the chance to see a group less efficient technically than our own but one in which each member has an entirely indi-

LEO KERSLEY WITH HIS WIFE, JANET SINCLAIR, AT A REHEARSAL IN AMSTERDAM

hotograph by Unifota, Amsterdam
(Left to Right). GERARD BITTER AS THE RICH MAN, MASCHA TER WEEME AS THE COURTESAN AND MAX DOOYES AS THE POOR YOUNG MAN IN "THE STREET OF IMAGINATION"

idual personality. This quality made the creation for his company of our *The Bewitched Costumes* easy and enoyable—but it is unnecessary to enlarge upon this ballet as he Production Club expect to present it with an Inglish cast at their next performance. However, as it s unfortunately unlikely that London will see the Ballet of the Low Countries soon, it might be of interest o give a brief outline of *The Street of Imagination*, though vords can give little idea of a ballet that is clear and ogical in action.

The curtain rises on a crowded street beside the Seine, a bookstall at the back. The bookseller has the power to give passers-by a vision in which their momenary flights of imagination seem to take place in reality. As a girl and boy, strangers, approach each other the bookseller shows the boy a dream book and his dream begins. The lights fade; next we see the boy alone by he sea. A fairy boat appears carrying the girl in ballet dress and they dance one of ballet's loveliest romantic *pas de deux* to a haunting tune. Eventually, we return to the street, the girl again in her everyday clothes passing the boy with indifference: he shrugs his shoulders and walks on. There are three more dreams shown: a clergyman stumbles over a beggar-woman and imagines himself healing the sick and comforting the wretched through his own faith: a courtesan wrongly chooses a rich man instead of her poor young lover and in her dream sees the former strangle her with the rope of pearls that seduced her; her nightmare over, she again chooses the wrong man. Finally we see a young soldier's wife flirting with an officer. In the soldier's dream, war breaks out; a hero, he is decorated by the officer and then discovers that he has unknowingly killed his wife, whereupon the officer in the likeness of Satan carries him off to Hell. His dream over, confused between vision and reality he tries to kill the officer but the passers-by separate them and he explains his dream—or, as the English programme note said, "He imports his fearvisions to the dashed-up bystanders". The crowd, seeking an explanation of these strange happenings, fall upon the bookseller, only to find he has disappeared and in his place is a child turning the pages of the dream book.

This apparently complicated story gives only a vague picture of one of the most original and complete ballets of past or present. The choreography is clear and simple, calling for musicality and intelligence more than technique. There is only one moment (the entry of the symbolical figures of War) when the invention falters, otherwise each scene and movement follows easily and logically with a dramatic grasp and composition that any choreographer might envy. The sets (Nico Wijnberg) are a miracle of economy, suggesting the different scenes vividly yet leaving nearly everything to the imagination. The score and scenario are by Albert Bocai, who is obviously as apt a ballet composer as Delibes, Tchaikovsky or Cohen, as his music

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"THUS TO RUMINATE—"

By ALAN STOREY

PART I

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age . . .

THERE are moments when it becomes essential, if one is to preserve a faint spark of optimism for the future, to move away from the art under review and study it from a distance; to see it as a cycloramic pattern whose ends curve gently out of sight—with the present (its urgency forgotten) no more than a last observable point in the sequence of events. This pattern usually consists of alternating periods, varying in length, of creative activity and stagnation, stasis and anti-stasis. In music, painting and poetry its complications are multiplied by the continual interweaving of past elements; so that, subject to necessary modifications required by contemporary taste, the form, idiom and even emotional outlook associated with one age may reappear in another. The pattern emerging from the history of ballet, however, is altogether more primitive and restricted. Denied access to the material achievements and failures of the past, the choreographer must perforce scamper helplessly round his little cage or, like an *enfant terrible* caught in a Kafkaesque nightmare, spend his days grappling with problems that seemingly have no answers, and whose workings, presumably once existent, are now unknown or unavailable. Today we find ourselves in a situation closely resembling that which existed in France between the years 1789—1830 or, in France and Russia, from 1850 until 1900. We are, in fact, living precariously on the rapidly diminishing legacy left to us by Diaghilev, just as Dauberval, Gardel, Petipa and Ivanov expended the remains of Noverre's reforms and the staled dreams of Romanticism. The common movement in all such periods is from creative unity to the isolation of technical virtuosity—whether it be that of the solo dancer or, as at present, the choreographer whose preoccupation with design to the exclusion of expression leads him into the shallow backwaters of themeless ballet. Yet, despite the ensuing general high level of executancy (and who would deny that more competent dancers exist today than ever before?), the lack of great interpretative artists is truly remarkable. Nearly fifty years separated Guimard from Grisi; whilst between Taglioni and the advent of Fokine, as Andre Levinson points out, "Un siècle devait s'écouler avant qu'une autre danseuse de sa rare espèce ne vînt ajouter a l'élégie de la *Sylphide* le nocturne de la *Mort du Cygne*."

The great dancer—the dancer of rare genius—emerges, it would seem, only at the beginning of a new age. Possessed of all the brilliance and *finesse* which arduous training and apprenticeship can provide, he or she is driven by a desire to soar beyond them and release the too long imprisoned spirit of the dance, that it may express again the world's joy and the world's sorrow in items understandable to all men. "There is an *au delà* to all great interpretative art, something that remains after story, words, picture, and gesture have faded vaguely into that storeroom in our memories where are concealed these lovely ghosts of ephemeral beauty, and the artist who is able to give this is blessed even beyond his knowledge, for to him has been vouchsafed the sacred kiss of the gods. This quality cannot be acquired; it cannot be described; but it can be felt." These words, from Carl Van Vechten's illuminating essay on Nijinsky, reveal the inimitable spirit inherent in each of the three dancers described in Paul Magriel's somewhat misleadingly styled *Monographs on the great dancers of our time.** The very names of Pavlova, Nijinsky and Isadora Duncan are still incantations. They breathe an enchantment evocative not only of nostalgic longings for a youth that is lost, or an age that has withered, but also (as if one had returned to the tentative explorations of childhood) of the sensations aroused by first experiences. For the power of the great artist lies in his ability to remove the split vision of maturity which is the price of extensive existence, and to reveal the oneness of things at the moment of their sensational impact. It is only in these moments of selection and deliberate exclusion that we live and cease merely to behave; in other words, accepting reality by ignoring its distorted, misused symbols.

Continued from previous page.
combines melodies and rhythms at once sympathetic and inspiring to the choreographer, dancer and audience.

It would be easy to fill another page about the dancers in this group, who work together happily all day and every day—including Sundays—despite their diverse personalities and meagre pay. We feel that if they can somehow keep working together with Dooyes and Bocai for another year or two, they will then startle London audiences as much as did the first visits of Champs-Elysées and Jooss.

*NIJINSKY. PAVLOVA. ISADORA DUNCAN. Three monographs edited by Paul Magriel. (A. & C. Black Ltd. each 12s. 6d. net.)

Thus Pavlova danced the death of a swan; not seeking to become the bird, but absorbing its being, Leda-like, into hers. And in those few terrible moments one wondered if this were Birth or Death. "I had seen birth and death," mused the Wise Man, "but had thought they were different; this Birth was hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death." The analogy is obvious, but it is made with humility and respect. Marianne Moore, writing on the Pavlova photographs, describes the "aura of holiness resting upon her" in *Le Cygne* and remarks on its corroboration by other observers; "it was a rite—arms resolutely folded, crusader-like, in the sign of the cross—'the rhythms disintegrating' symbolically as in Giselle's dancing they disintegrated under madness, literally undoing her earthly joy." "The emotion transferred was so overpowering," C. W. Beaumont recalls, "that it seemed a mockery to applaud when the dance came to an end."

Neither great art nor the great artist is imitative in the true sense of the word. The difference between Petipa's Odette and Fokine's Swan illustrates a revolutionary transition from technical ingenuity to an inspired exploration of genuine romantic expression. Odette never ceases to be a dancer in a charade hap-

PAVLOVA AND MORDKIN IN "BACCHANALE"
Photograph by Ernest Schneider, Berlin

hazardly organised to display the skill and superficial invention of her choreographer in his exploitation of the "Ballerina Myth." Even her occasional preenings and flutterings are no more than naive and, to the spectator, embarrassing symbols designed to remind one of an elusive theme and character. In *La Mort du Cygne*, however, Fokine returned at last to the principles formulated by Noverre over a hundred years before. This ballet—for it is peopled with too many images, contains too many implications to be dismissed as a mere *pas seul*—was Fokine's real manifesto of a new age which reached the heights of its achievement in *Petrouchka* and has since steadily declined. Historically it is the most important of all Fokine's works, not only because it provided the one point where three such diverse and, in many respects, temperamentally opposed talents as those of Pavlova, Nijinsky and Duncan fused momentarily, but also because it revealed, for the first time within living memory, a choreographer's recognition that (to quote John Martin) "The dancer's body is a totally sentient organism capable of encompassing movements far more extended in rage and dynamism, speed, and elasticity, than those encountered in routine living . . . in his dancing he is dealing with the impulses and experiences of nature, projecting only the passions of men, and not attempting acrobatic feats, contortions, or any movements that violate nature; he is nevertheless not dealing in naturalistic gestures and so-called life movements, for he is presenting an idealisation, an interpretation, a concentration of life experience, which because it is less diffuse than actuality must be correspondingly more intense."

Possibly the importance of Isadora Duncan's contribution to Fokine's "new" conception of the dance medium may have been overrated by her idolaters—certainly it cannot be precisely determined by the choreologist. But it is significant that although Fokine denied that the "Russian Ballet" was simply a development of "Duncanism," declaring in his five points that "as a matter of fact the new Russian ballet is sharply differentiated by its principles . . . from the art of that great dancer," he was equally ready to admit his indebtedness to her. "She introduced natural dancing" he wrote, "in which the body of the dancer was liberated not only from stays and satin slippers, but also from the dance-steps of the (old) ballet. She founded her dancing on natural movements and on the most natural of all dance-forms—namely the dancing of the ancient Greeks." My own belief is that Isadora gave a tangible form of expression to many of Fokine's still untried theories and, by her successful efforts in freeing the *individual* body from the restrictions of conventionalised movement and costume, provided him with the necessary impetus to carry out more extensive and complex reforms in the ballet as a composite whole. Indeed the relationship existing between the work of these two artists provides

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Photograph by Angus McBean

"CAPRIOL SUITE" AS PERFORMED BY SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

"CAPRIOL SUITE" and "SELINA"

ON Tuesday, October 8th, Frederick Ashton's eighteen-year-old ballet, *Capriol Suite*, was put into the repertoire of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

Still danced by Ballet Rambert, it is the oldest ballet in the English repertoire and worthy of its place for more reasons than that of being a memorial to the happy springtime of Ashton's invention. Except that the dancers have been increased from four couples to six for the sake of convenience in the *entrées*, and a slight re-arrangement of the finale (I prefer the original with all the dancers running out as the curtain falls), there is almost no alteration to the choreography, which is as fresh as ever. The pink of the costumes is a little intensified and the style is a little blurred by the (seemingly) ineradicable boisterousness of this still very youthful company, but it is still there—the observation, taste, invention, wit, feeling for beauty of a young and inexperienced choreographer who had much to learn but already knew all the things that really matter, those things that can never be taught. How contentedly one might contemplate the future of English Ballet could one feel that somewhere there is a young choreographer about to show us a work similarly teeming with promise!

If I am a little uneasy about *Selina* (first night November 16th) it is because I hold most strongly that satire and parody are only permissible when the perpetrators have a thorough knowledge of the original. Andrée Howard can undoubtedly claim such a knowledge and Peter Williams, her fellow-scenarist, proves his with a design for a Romantic grotto with the indispensable waterfall which is the 1830's to the last quivering leaf. But what about the Company? Time enough, I feel, for parody when it can mount a *Giselle* of its own and understand how to dance it. The choreographer may have felt this, for after a delicate, if tentative, start which is over-long but might be the real thing, she alternates between a host of subtle flicks at *Giselle*, *La Sylphide*, *et. al.* with some nose thumbing, in passing, at *Swan Lake*, and then allows her sense of humour to get thoroughly out of hand with Agnes, a Witch (superb nomenclature), an uproarious character whose difficulty with her magic would soften a heart of stone, though she is perhaps better suited to the later hours of a thoroughly good party than to a ballet stage.

Continued at foot of next page, Column 1

MORE NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

By WALTER GORE

Dear P.W.,

This company really is becoming air-minded. They've flown from Halifax in Canada to San Francisco in America; from Melbourne, Australia, to Broken Hill, also Australia; and now they are flying the Tasman to Auckland in New Zealand. They are to fly back to Sydney after the New Zealand tour is over too. Taking oceans, mountains, deserts in their stride, they even begin to shoot a line about it when I, Victorian Gore, trundle off on my own by train and boat. They ask me if I've seen Queen Anne lately, and whether Gladstone will speak in the House this afternoon. I take it with a smile and hide my time, for I know we have to cross the Cook Strait from North Island to South Island later in the tour, and then the Bligh in me will have its revenge. I shall tell them with glee of the smallness of the boat, a mere cockleshell, and the evil reputation of the notoriously mountainous seas met with in that channel. They cannot believe that I prefer to take three days to do what they can do in seven hours. I tell them in reply they don't see anything from the air. They get in a 'plane, take off, fly through one cloud after another and then land without having seen anything. On the other hand, if they travel as I do they see the land and smell the good earth and trees, and what's more they don't have jugs of sauce poured down their necks as happened to Rambert. It seems when half way through their flight to Chicago from Halifax, a storm threatened, developed, and then the 'plane dropped fifty feet like a stone. Up in the air went plates, cups, food, and down they came all over everybody. The sauce poured itself down the back of Rambert's neck. But right down. Frankly I'd rather have salt water than sauce, and salt water is what I'm getting now, rolling, and how! across the Tasman on a two-by-four boat. She has a bad name, very skittish, they told me; likes to kick her heels in the air. Oh, but I had certainly chosen the wrong boat for the wrong sea. All this and plenty more they told me. They gave me this sea trip with pleasure, they said I could have it. I told them they could have their air travel, and with that we shook hands and parted. I must admit I felt reluctant to begin this Tasman Passage, but for a reason I had not expected. I had become attached to Australia, and as the old *Wahine* left the jetty, stern forward making for the Harbour exit, I felt a White Cliffs of Dover feeling come over me. There were all the familiar things sliding past. The water-front, the ferries, the Big Bridge, the innumerable clocks that never work, all combining to lower my spirits.

As we met the rollers of the Tasman I felt desperately sad, and climbed up the rigging a way to watch the land

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Continued from previous page.

Yes, of course, we all roared with laughter—but is Agnes going to seem quite so funny when we have seen her half-a-dozen times? I am under the unhappy necessity of writing this the day after seeing *Selina* at its première and I intend to write again later on, for the test of any ballet is not how one enjoys it the first time but whether one enjoys it more and more as time goes on.

Stanley Holden relishes every second of Agnes, as well he might, and must pursue the recently untrodden paths of balletic comedy. Pirmin Trecu hurls himself at a male solo which he will dance twice as well when he appears to be trying half as hard: Elaine Fifield is too robust for a Romantic ballerina but otherwise is beautifully in character, and Hans Zullig brings his simple dignity to the part of the hero and makes it as distinguished as he does every part he touches.

After *Selina* the company will be occupied for a time with the opera ballets, in particular the big ballet for *Schwanda the Bagpiper* which has its first night on December 15th. P.W.M.

WALTER GORE CAUGHT IN A BACKSTAGE MOMENT

Photograph by Alec Murray

for as long as I could, just like any dinkum Aussie. Funny isn't it? Not that Australia has replaced England in my affection, not on your life, but it means something to me now where before it was just a name on the other side of the world; a red patch on the world map which I had no particular desire to visit. But now . . . I think most of us feel that way. We have met such kindness here, such enthusiasm for us and for our work that we have to be insular indeed not to feel affection for this country. And so, as Mr. Fitzpatrick says, with the sun slowly sinking in the West, we say farewell to this land of Australia, only the sun wasn't sinking in the West. It wasn't sinking at all. It was skulking overhead behind a barrier of rain clouds, and the further behind we left Australia the wetter and colder the weather became. A heaving grey sea, wet decks, flying clouds.

Round about breakfast time we raised New Zealand. There she was to starboard, a long low forbidding black cloud on the horizon, and by lunch time we could make out snow capped mountains. There were people aboard who had never in their lives seen snow until now, and this sight thrilled them beyond words. I must say it looked rather good, but I was wondering what my feet would say when they were forced to step it lively in that kind of temperature. I soon found out. Beautiful though the country is, at the end of a performance one was just beginning to get warm. Joyce said she was going to hire herself out as a portable ice box when she got back.

Not always was it as cold, though it was more often so than not, but the beauty of the countryside more than made up for it. One minute you imagine yourself in Scotland with its placid lochs reflecting tall mountains, and the next you swear you are in Essex, or Cumberland, or Sussex. In the early morning, on the rare days of sunshine, the crisp snow-sharpened air would sweep in from across the mountains, making one feel so exhilarated that it was a joy to be alive. The air could be crystal clear sometimes, and at others a grey damp mist would come down making one think of Glasgow. At such times one just took comfort from the warmth of the reception the audience gave to our work. As I understand it they had had only two companies before us in ten years, and were greeting us with undisguised joy. They jammed the box office in Auckland and had police, well one policeman anyway, to see they kept the line, spilling out on to the pavement, as orderly as possible. They took us to their hearts without a doubt. Everywhere it was the same. Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, and even in the small towns we visited after we had played the Big Four. Incidentally, in one of the small towns, the company just moved out one day ahead of a whirlwind which half wrecked the place.

Also in one of these small towns, Palmerston North to be precise, we met an old member of the Ballet Club.

BELINDA WRIGHT WITH THE AUSTRALIAN DANCER, BASIL TRURO, IN "CASSE NOISETTE"

She arrived after the performance complete with her membership card, signed by Tudor as the then secretary, and bundles of old programmes. Imagine my surprise and delight to see one which gave my first appearance with Ballet Rambert. How I wished I could have it.

I got it.

These members of the Old Guard keep turning up in the oddest places. She was the fourth. Not only Ballet Club members but old acquaintances of the dance world and friends of whom one hasn't heard for years. Remember Jocelyn Yeo? She recalled herself to my memory in Sydney after a matinée. With her small daughter by her side she sighed about the old days, and sends her thoughts to all in London who know her.

All this talk has made me forget that what I really wrote to tell you about was the new ballet. You asked me in your last letter what it was called, who was in it, what the music was, etc. Well, it is called *Winter Night*. Nothing to do with seasons or snow. As I have said in my programme description, it is not an abstract ballet nor yet a ballet of realism. It is Dance Allegory for three characters, a man and two women and is based on the following quotation:

Robert. "We have loved, Felice, and now . . . "

Felice. "And now?"

Robert. " . . . there comes the parting. Life consists of meeting and parting. How else is it life?"

Felice. "This parting is the winter night of my despair."

Aimée. "It is for me the bright summer now beginning."

Sally is Felice, Paula is Aimée and I am Robert, though we are not named so in the programme. An Australian, Kenneth Rowell, is doing the décor. He has a fine sense of colour, and I think he will do a good job, though we are at a disadvantage in having to work it out with fourteen hundred miles of sea between us. You see I had thought of another ballet, but this had to be abandoned because certain musicians were not available, so when I decided on *Winter Night* it was just about time for us to leave Sydney, giving me barely time to talk to Rowell before I left. However, air transport is good here and designs can be received in a couple of days, so we are keeping the airways solvent by despatching vast bundles of drawings backwards and forwards.

It has a *corps* of twelve, in which are quite a few Australians. Some of them are very good dancers, and, as a point of doubtful interest, I am on the stage for roughly twenty-five minutes without going off. In fact all the principals are on stage almost all the time, which is a change in a Gore ballet, for people usually spend their time dashing round braces and lights off-stage in order to fly across the stage and do the same thing on the other side. Those who implore me to have less entrances and exits in my ballets will think at last that I have seen the light.

Winter Night was begun in Auckland and finished in Wellington. Three and a half weeks in all. Three and a half weeks of happiness for me, because more and more do I become lethargic when not making a ballet, and more and more excited and happy when I can let myself loose amongst dancers, costumes and music, and make something of it all. One of these days I hope to create a really worthwhile ballet, and with luck I might do it. When I say luck I mean if I am lucky enough to have continued opportunities to go on working, lucky enough to have such willing co-operators and inspiring dancers round me, but above all if I am lucky enough to have been born creative. Time will show.

In the meantime, Marjorie practices the Rachmaninoff in every spare moment—she's getting crotchets before the eyes; letters and cables go back and forth between cities asking about costumes; lighting plots are worked out, discarded and worked out again; while the dancers' bodies are flying this way and that way, so that when the great night comes all will be as well as can be expected. I hope I will have good news of that night to send you, which is not so far off now as it was when we began the ballet. Naturally.

It is some time since I last put word on paper, and in that time we have collected a good bag of Mayoral Receptions; travelled in buses past rushing mountain torrents and along the very edge of these mountain roads where one slip would be too bad; we've felt earth tremors; missed landslides by minutes, whirlwinds by hours; choked at the smell of the sulphur springs and boiling mud; met a Maori Princess; witnessed genuine Maori tribal dances and "done" the famous Rotarua and now have returned to Australia. Brisbane is where we returned to and by so doing have completed fifty-two weeks of work. We've danced to a million people and enjoyed doing it. We shall come home well satisfied and not a little proud of the happiness we've given so many people, and with many a happy memory not the least of which are two connected with Brisbane.

One was the excitement of making a colour and sound film of *Simple Symphony* for the Brisbane Department of Instruction for use in schools. They took us in a fleet of luxurious cars to a place by the sea, and there in bare feet we danced partly on the beach and partly on the stone foreshore. The setting was incredibly like a décor and not so very far removed from Ronnie's backcloth. Flat sand with pools of water here and there,

SALLY GILMOUR AS PRETTY POLLY PERKINS IN "MR. PUNCH"

Photograph by The Courier Mail, Brisbane.

MAKING THE FILM OF "SIMPLE SYMPHONY" TO WHICH WALTER GORE REFERS IN HIS LETTER

an odd anchor in the mud and a lovely blue and white fishing boat lying on its side. We had interruptions, of course. A small child ran in amongst us, apparently to join in the game of leap frog, and five minutes later a lean, hungry looking character poked his head over the sea wall in the true Chad manner. It was fun, I can tell you. If we'd collected sixpence a head from the by-standers, we could have made ourselves sick every day for a whole week on ice cream. The other incident took place outside the stage door one night. I was accosted by a big husky chap who said, "You're from the ballet, aren't you?" I admitted that I was, and then stood back to wait for what came next. What did come surprised me. He said, "Look, when this company came to Brisbane, me and a cobber of mine got talking about it, and my cobber bet me a quid I wouldn't sit through a performance. Well me, being a sporting kind of joker, I said to meself a quid's a quid whichever way you look at it, and I took him on. Now, I not only sat through the show, but I didn't take his quid, *and* I'm only playing the races twice a week instead of three so I can afford to come and see the rest of the shows. That's how good I think you people are." Before I could think of a reply he went on, "Oh I shall be back playing the horses on full time after you've gone, but I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed it," and with that he walked away. When you can lure a racing man away from his horses you've really lured.

Now we are in Adelaide and I really must stop. I'm sorry to inflict such long letters on you, but if I don't say all I can when I can, I'd never say anything. All right, I know the answer to that one.

Give my love to London, and tell Fred when you see him, that at least fifty people have asked me about *Symphonic Variations*. I've described it so often I feel I made the ballet myself.

Wally

INTERNATIONAL BALLET IN LONDON

By MARY CLARKE

INTERNATIONAL BALLET'S eight-week season at the London Casino during October-November contained no new works although the Australian ballet *Sea Legend* and the company's revival of *The Sleeping Princess* were given for the first time in the West End of London. As it is over a year now since International last gave a West End season it may be opportune to consider the general state of the company.

The repertoire shown during these eight weeks consisted of eleven ballets of which only four were works which had been created specially for the company in the seven and a half years of its existence while the rest were revivals from either the Imperial Russian or Diaghilev eras. Such a repertoire is not, to my mind, anything like large enough to sustain so long a season unless the numerous performances of each ballet can be justified by superb production and there are several great dancers capable of sharing the major roles. International Ballet's productions of nearly all the ballets in their repertoire leave a great deal to be desired on almost all counts and their lack of even capable soloists is only too apparent.

This shortage of soloists is the more distressing because there is no sign of any particular talent among the younger members of the company. Every ballet company is liable to lose its promising dancers—indeed unless there is some slight but continual change of personnel the atmosphere tends to become static and routine—but there must be *adequate* replacement if the overall quality of the company is to be maintained. Among the soloists of International Ballet today Claudie Algeranova is a dancer of rare intelligence and ability who would have been valued by the Russian companies of the 'thirties and is under-rated today, while Domini Callaghan has a sensibility that emerges beautifully in *Sea Legend* but is elsewhere hardly exploited. These two dancers have been the company's chief support for years; they both dance in almost every ballet and are

MONA INGLESBY AS ODETTE IN "SWAN LAKE"
Photograph by Kemsley Studios

MONA INGLESBY AND ERNEST HEWITT IN THE VISION SCENE OF "THE SLEEPING PRINCESS"
Photograph by Stewart Bale Ltd.

undoubtedly over-worked. Yet how can the situation be relieved until there is someone of like quality to replace them? From the present *corps de ballet* answer comes there none and Hélène Armfelt has as yet shown little more than a quiet efficiency as understudy to Mona Inglesby. Male dancers, as we all know to our sorrow, are proportionately inferior to and scarcer than female dancers in all English ballet companies (with the possible exception of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet) so perhaps, in Michel de Lutry, International have their fair quota of one capable, if immature, soloist. But the record is uninspiring when compared with names like Tarakanova, Turner, Shearer, Franca, Negus and Graeme who enlivened the company's early seasons, and unless something can be done to improve the present situation the future outlook will remain dim. The pity is that the *corps de ballet has* improved under Sergueff's direction and Mona Inglesby herself goes from strength to strength. But while the soloists are so inadequate the effect is of a sandwich with the filling left out.

One of the chief virtues of Dorothy Stevenson's *Sea Legend* is that it realises the resources of the company and makes effective use of them. It tells a simple if unoriginal story of a mortal who falls in love with a sea maiden and is lured by her to his death in the vindictive sea. Only the bare bones of the story are suggested by the choreography and the absence of ancillary themes causes the choreographer to complete her storytelling in a much shorter time than the composer does, so there is a protracted ending which spoils the effect of the whole ballet. In the early movements, however, there is much interesting composition and the *corps de ballet* is used with great invention to suggest the waves of the sea—a suggestion which would be increased if the dancers would adopt a more supernatural make-up. Claudie Algeranova and her efficient *porteur* are remarkably effective as a couple of baleful sirens and Domini Callaghan now dances the part of the Mermaid most attractively. Michel de Lutry displays the bounding high spirits of a healthy fisher-boy and if the ballet could end about five minutes before it actually does—with the lovely floating passage of the Mermaid across the back of the stage—it would be almost completely successful. John Bainbridge has contrived some fine costumes and a rather wooden set and Esther Rofe's music has an easily recognisable marine flavour. All in all, *Sea Legend* is one of the most intelligent new ballets International have ever presented.

I wish the same could be said of their production of *The Sleeping Princess*. This is officially described as being reconstructed from the Maryinsky version by Nicolas Sergueff and it retains most of the episodes which Diaghilev (so wisely) edited or removed in his 1921 production. The fairies Diamond, Silver, Gold and Sapphire are back (instead of the Florestan *pas de trois*); the Prince performs his incongruous little step dance after the *grand adagio*; Cinderella is allowed to regain her prince in a most revoltingly arch *divertissement*; there is a promenade of nine couples representing fairy tales; and the Vision Scene is joined to the Awakening by the Panorama—the interval coming after the Awakening and before the last act celebrations. This last arrangement is a good one and would be a better if any attempt at all had been made to present a transformation scene. The production has been compared to a pantomime by several writers; unfortunately it displays none of the technical ingenuity in stagecraft that used to be the chief joy of genuine pantomime.

The decoration may be a true reflection of the taste of Imperial Russia in the 1890's but even period reconstructions must be related to modern taste—if it is only in the cut of the costumes. The amber and gold velvets of the maids of honour in the Birthday scene are, however, delightful.

The staging of the famous Waltz always earned an ovation from the Casino audiences—which probably illustrates all kinds of things about popular taste. But if all those artificial flowers were, as Miss Hermione Gingold used to say, laid end to end, they would probably reach right back to the Maryinsky—or anyway to the old Empire in Leicester Square.

Of the dancing in *The Sleeping Princess* there is very little that need be said. Mona Inglesby carries the long role of Aurora with tremendous assurance and remarkable accomplishment. She is one of the strongest dancers I have ever seen and in swift *allegro* passages (like her *pas seul* immediately before the entry of Carabosse) she is quite dazzling. She has developed much better control in *adagio* now and her Vision Scene is beautifully performed. Her elevation is very great and should render her ideal in all spiritual parts when she has learned to give an impression of rising effortlessly, of being drawn up from the ground by her very lightness—as Markova does. At the moment one sees too clearly how it is done; one admires the development of leg and foot muscles which can give such propulsion but any sense of flight is destroyed by the dancer's habit of looking down at her feet and by her still heavy arms.

The other good performance in *The Sleeping Princess* comes from Claudie Algeranova who not only dances the Princess Florine in the Blue Bird *pas de deux* beautifully but seems to have heard of Perrault's story as well.

The rest of the company lack style rather than actual technique. Typically, Ernest Hewitt, as Prince Désiré, is not a bad partner but lacks almost every other qualification for the part. He is over-eager, does far too much, too fussy mime, never begins to look like a prince and does not even dominate the Hunting Scene. "*Je savais marcher sur la scène comme personne*" wrote Marie Taglioni. Oh, that someone could teach these dancers to do likewise!

STEPS OF THE BALLET

THE purpose of this film is to show how a ballet is created, not (as might be expected from the title) how a dancer acquires technique. It is in many ways so good that it is all the more a pity that financial resources did not allow it to be better. Made by the Crown Film Unit, it is handicapped by the fact that the demonstrating of the process of ballet creation for educational and instructional purposes is a very different proposition from that of showing the workings of the General Post Office, our Railway system or anything else that will stay put while it is being photographed. This Unit was also responsible for that excellent film "Instruments of the Orchestra", to which the new film may be considered as a companion piece, but again the circumstances of its making cannot be compared, since members of an orchestra are only required to sit or stand while they scrape, pluck, blow or bang their respective instruments and the camera can move round them to supply the necessary variety of action.

"Steps of the Ballet" suffers from having been made too obviously on the cheap, and the ordinary cinema audiences to which it must presumably be largely addressed since a general release has been arranged, will certainly come away with the idea that English Ballet is a somewhat hole-and-corner affair which takes place on the whole in parish halls. I am not sure, either, that it is a very good idea to have it shown by the British Council in countries all over the world (including the extremely wealthy South American states) as being representative of how our Ballet functions.

I must emphasise that the people directly responsible for the making of this film, producer, director, choreographer, composer, designer, etc. have carried out an extremely difficult task supremely well—a task made all the more difficult for the reasons just stated. How I should love to see the film they *might* have been able to make!

Its opening, with dancing figures in practice costume moving singly or in groups behind the superimposed credit titles at once gives promise of the taste and intelligence which is evident throughout. The bar and centre practice which follows bears the most fleeting resemblance to the real thing, but it must be borne in mind that the attention to be held is that of the non-balletgoer to whom *pliés* and *battements* are not only a mystery but a potential bore. There follows a brief demonstration of a few of the steps and it is here that

A SCENE FROM THE BALLET, THE MAKING OF WHICH IS DESCRIBED IN THE FILM "STEPS OF THE BALLET". ALEXANDER GRANT (*Left*) AND GERD LARSEN (*Right*)

A REHEARSAL SCENE FROM THE FILM "STEPS OF THE BALLET"

economy first shows its head, for it is evident that at times a shot which suited the camera has been used rather than one which showed step and dancer to best advantage. For example, it is unfortunate that Robert Helpmann's voice as commentator saying "You will see how important balance is to a dancer" should come immediately after we have seen the girl demonstrating an *attitude* wobbling rather badly as she takes her position; and that the male dancer performing a *double tour en l'air* should come down off balance. Had sufficient takes been possible, co-ordination between camera and dancer could have been achieved. The music also, which was recorded separately and dubbed afterwards (and Arthur Benjamin's score is excellent) is not always timed accurately to the dancers' movements so that they sometimes seem off-beat which I am sure they were not.

In spite of all these factors the film succeeds in giving a real insight into how a ballet is constructed, and while every balletgoer will certainly find every moment of it fascinating, it should also hold the interest of a far wider public. Congratulations of the sincerest kind are due to producer Alexander Shaw, director Muir Mathieson, choreographer Andreé Howard (on whom the greatest burden fell), composer Arthur Benjamin and designer Hugh Stevenson who will realise, I hope, that none of my adverse criticisms are in any way levelled at them.

P.W.M.

Balletomane's Bookshelf

STUDIES IN BALLET. By William Chappell. (John Lehmann, 15s. net.)

The name of William Chappell was one of the first to emerge in the earliest days of English Ballet. I remember him in *Leda and the Swan* with Argyle, Ashton and Turner as far back as 1928 or 1929—Mr. Chappell's own disinclination to verify dates allows me a similar vagueness. Not long after, he began to make a name as ballet designer, and it seemed that his abilities in that direction would outstrip his achievements as a dancer. Later still, during the war, a third great talent manifested itself, and one began to wonder whether, after all, posterity might rank him highest as a writer. His present book would confirm this view were it not that his drawings for it are the best things he has ever done. It does not fall to many of us to earn distinction in three separate careers, but Chappell has done exactly that and *Studies in Ballet* confirms his reputation in each capacity, though Chappell, designer-dancer, is kept autobiographically speaking, firmly in the background. A dancer who can write is a rarity, almost a phenomenon, though when it does happen the result is a *Theatre Street* by Karsavina (about whom Chappell writes so justly, so admiringly and so lovingly). Beside this, though it is a very different kind of book, can now be placed *Studies in*

Ballet. Chappell knows what it feels like to be a dancer and presents a wonderfully convincing picture of a dancer's life though this is only one of the aspects he has set himself to write about and he is equally stimulating in a variety of other directions. My praise of his book will mean nothing to Mr. Chappell whose contempt for ballet critics would deny them the right to express an opinion, but I must "speak as I find" and I revelled in his pages, though feeling that at times his understandable loyalty to and admiration for the company with which he worked so long leads him to take up unnecessary cudgels on their behalf.

MUSIC AND THE DANCE. By Edwin Evans. (Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 6s. net.)

The late Edwin Evans was one of the best friends English Ballet has ever had. Long before it was fashionable to be known as a patron he gave practical help and encouragement, and his something more than burly figure, sitting in an end seat of the stalls, seemed an earnest of the stability which still lay in the future. Evans was a great friend of Diaghilev and his own interest in ballet, fostered by his love of music and educated by his intimate acquaintance with all the outstanding figures of the Russian Ballet, made him one of the best critics of ballet this country has ever produced. This book is the outcome of his two loves and his themes range from the choosing of suitable music for dance arrangements by teachers for their pupils to the first performance of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*. Most of these articles appeared originally in *The Dancing Times* and there is, owing to their specialised nature, a certain amount of repetition, but there is much here to interest, fascinate and instruct.

ROMANTIC BALLET. With an Introduction by Sacheverell Sitwell. (B. T. Batsford Ltd., 6s. 6d. net.)

Here are sixteen colour reproductions of some of the most famous of the lithographs which immortalise the ballet goddesses (very rarely the gods) of the middle years of the last century. It is an enchanting book though it seems to me that in many cases the colours are too harsh compared with the lithographs in the Mercury Theatre collection from which they were actually reproduced and which I have a very good reason for knowing extremely well. Sacheverell Sitwell writes of them with tenderness, love and exactly the right touch of delicate humour, though can a Sitwell really be guilty of the split infinitive on Page 4, and surely the leg armour to which he has occasion to refer is spelt "Greaves"? These are small points which one would not mention had this introduction come from a less illustrious pen.

DANCE 1939. (Phoenix House Ltd. by arrangement with the British Council. 12s. 6d. net.)

This symposium of Ballet, Films, Music and Painting is taken care of by, respectively, Arnold L. Haskell, Dilys Powell, Rollo Myers and Robin Ironside. It started life as four of a series of booklets previously issued by the British Council and therefore suffers from an air of having been written a considerable time ago, as indeed is the case, and the fact that the essays are not intended to be critical surveys of the particular arts under discussion. The Ballet and Music sections suffer most from this imposed limitation so that their value is chiefly as a record of events during the war years, for the period covered ceases at 1944. Arnold Haskell must now be able to write this kind of thing in his sleep, and probably does in sheer self-defence. A little more enterprise might well have been shown over the choice of pictures which are now "very old hat".

P.W.M.

Continued from page 19.

a striking parallel to that between Sallé and Noverre which would be carried further if space permitted.

Isadora Duncan was an Olympian figure: "I sprang full-fledged from the head of Zeus!" she would reply to those who questioned her on the genesis of her dance; and in Germany she was known as "*die gottliche, heilige Isadora.*" One thinks of her as the personification of some ancient matriarchy, as the symbol of fecundity; immensely driven by the compulsion of an inner, instinctive life. It is easy enough, in retrospect, to laugh at her high seriousness of purpose and solemn pre-Raphaelite sense of beauty; but somehow the laughter has an uncertain ring; it breaks out as a symptom of the defensive reaction we make to all overwhelming forces and, in particular, to those elements which cannot be fitted comfortably into the organised pattern of human existence. It is hardly surprising that Isadora found her most immediate and lasting recognition among the sculptors and painters of Western Europe. Her art, with its plasticity, weight and dynamic unbroken planes, was far closer to theirs than to the peripheral nature of contemporary academic dance. They painted her, sketched her, and modelled her; for the inspiration she gave them was illimitable. Perhaps no greater tribute was ever paid to her memory than that contributed by the French art-critic and aesthetician Elie Faure to *La Revue de la Femme*, in 1927. "In the wake of the illusions she scattered like a sower," he wrote, "she caused to sprout in the souls of poets, dancers, sculptors, painters, and in the anonymous masses, so many emotions that are not visible but echo from place to place, creating a state of collective sensibility where the seed grows effortlessly. She rehabilitated the dance, forgotten or unknown, the humble and glorious dance, guardian, with song and popular pottery, of the concrete genius of races, ceaselessly deformed and slandered by professional artists."

To be concluded

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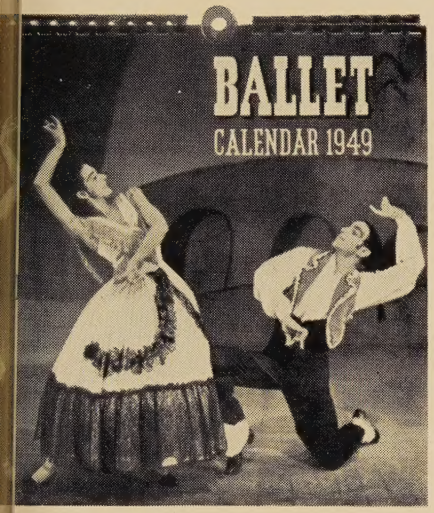

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